

ADVICE FROM THE EXPERTS



Power Your Marketing Programs With High Voltage Communications™ Part I

[By Randy Siegel]

Persuasion, seduction, negotiation, and fear have lost their effectiveness to clinch the deal, close the sale, and make cash registers ring. Whiter, brighter, faster, and better—while intriguing—no longer motivate consumers to act. Today’s savvy marketers are shifting strategies to more strongly connect with customers; they are harnessing the power of the four Ps of high voltage communications™—personhood, purpose, persona, and presence—to promote their products, services, issues, and organizations.

Sick of the impersonal quality of much of their daily lives, Americans are seeking to reconnect and build stronger relationships. “In all walks of life, we see a trend toward wanting to convert impersonal transactions into personal relations,” reports famed futurist Daniel Yankelovich.

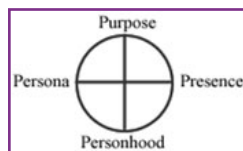
Connection, or the feeling of belonging, is one of the top three human needs, according to psychologist Abraham Maslow, after physical needs. In our well-fed society, almost all of our physiological and safety needs are being met, but for many the need for connection is not, and smart businesses are responding.

The image of business today is being altered, says futurist Faith Popcorn in her bestselling book *Clicking*. “[Business will be] no longer seen as a war to be won by trouncing the competition, but viewed as a complicated mosaic to be developed, one relationship at a time.”

Sharp marketers forge stronger connections with their constituents by building deeper relationships that result in trust, and this trust is built on the four Ps of high voltage communications™.

Personhood: Personhood requires companies to be self-aware, self-accepting, and self-disclosing. In order to be self-aware and accepting, many marketers use a tool called “gap analysis.” During a gap analysis, research is conducted to determine if a company’s current reputation matches its desired one: if it doesn’t, further research is required to find out why. If it’s because of consumers’ perceptions, marketers know they must do a better job of promoting, and if it’s a real problem, they understand changes must be made.

Personhood also requires being authentic, and after the corporate scandals of 2002, being authentic has never been so important.



“In the current environment, it’s time for brands to rethink their basic brand foundation and consider adding a pillar around trust. They must clarify their company’s values and synchronize them with their customers’ values,” says Ed Keller,

CEO of RoperASW, one the world’s most respected market research firms.

Smart marketers earn consumers’ trust when they are self-disclosing and/or willing to make fun of themselves. A good example is when Jaguar confronted its reputation for mechanical problems and turned its business around by promoting, “We kept what you loved. The rest is history.”

By putting a face on a product, issue, or organization, high voltage marketers™ use personhood to personalize their products. But a pretty face is not enough; they are also using storytelling.

“The power of the story is upstaging the power of the sound bite in advertising,” writes Melinda Davis in her book *The New Culture of Desire: Five Radical New Strategies That Will Change Your Business and Your Life*. A good story is more personal and credible than a contrived advertising slogan, and we will remember a story long after a catchy tagline has faded from our memory.

Dave Thomas of Wendy’s, Scottie Mayfield of Mayfield Dairies, and Chrysler’s Lee Iococca



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are good examples of how marketers have used personhood to promote products. These CEOs are comfortable talking about themselves and are able to connect their stories to customers' needs. Personalizing and storytelling work because they help people form emotional bonds with the company and its products.

Look for Randy's discussion of the other three Ps in "Power Your Marketing Programs With High Voltage Communications™ Part II" coming soon!

About the Author

The "Career Engineer" Randy Siegel works with organizations to take high-potential

employees and give them the leadership and communications skills they need to be successful as they rise through the organization. Electrify your career by subscribing to his complimentary monthly e-newsletter at www.buildyourleaders.com.

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